Business Plan 2011-2014

Equality, Equity and

Inclusion for All Women

PROVINCIAL ADVISORY COUNCIL
ON THE STATUS OF
WOMEN
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women

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MESSAGE from the President/CEO

April 1, 2011

On behalf of the members of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women (PACSW), I am pleased to submit our Business Plan for 2011-2014.

This Business Plan was prepared by the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act* provisions for a Category 2 Government entity. As such, our plan focuses on the processes necessary to advance the equality of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. It reflects the development of PACSW's three-year Business Plan commencing 2011.

The progress and achievements of this plan will be provided in each Annual Report, including an explanation of any variances which might occur during the year.

In preparing this plan, careful consideration was given to the strategic directions identified by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women in Appendix A.

As President/CEO, my signature indicates that this plan was developed by the members of the Advisory Council and that we are accountable for achieving the identified goals and objectives.

Linda Ross

Linda Ross, President/CEO
Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women - NL

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1.0 Overview

The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women was established in 1980 by the Government of the day and received legislative standing with the introduction of the *Status of Women Advisory Council Act*. It was created to advise Government on issues affecting the status of women as well as to raise awareness of women's issues within the general public. The Women's Policy Office is responsible for the *Status of Women Advisory Council Act*.

The eleven-member Advisory Council is appointed for three-year terms by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. Appointments reflect the regional representation of women with diverse backgrounds and experience. The members are eligible for re-appointment. The Advisory Council is an arms-length, external agency which reports to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women.

Current members were appointed for a three-year term in April 2009, which will end in March, 2012. There is provision in the governing act for members to be re-appointed. Five of the eleven Council members were re-appointed and are presently in their second term.

Members of the Advisory Council for 2011-2012 include:

Linda Ross, President/CEO
Carolyn Lavers, Vice-President, Port au Choix
Mary Pia Benuen, Sheshatshiu
Stephanie Flowers, Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Yamuna Kutty, St. John's
Michelle Murdoch, St. John's
Kelly Power, Paradise
Hilda Whelan, Whitbourne

- *three vacancies exist at the time of drafting of this plan*

Please see **Appendix B** for biographical information.

The President/CEO position is salaried and filled through an open competition and subsequent appointment. Council members other than the President/CEO are selected and appointed through an open nomination process. Selection criteria include representation from diverse women's populations and sectors, demonstrated leadership in working to advance the status of women and the ability to work on women's equality issues from a community, regional or provincial perspective.

All staff positions within the Advisory Council are currently filled by women. Four full-time staff conducts the day to day work: President/CEO, Research and Policy Analyst, Communications and Outreach Director and Executive Administrator.

The Advisory Council staff work closely with the Women's Policy Office, a branch of Executive Council. The mandate of the Women's Policy Office is to:

a) *develop and expedite Government policies and programs to enhance the social and economic status of women in the province and ensure that these are communicated to the public;*

b) *ensure that the impact on women of all legislation, policies and programs is brought to the attention of the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Cabinet, Cabinet Committees and departments;*

c) *monitor and review programs and other activities of government departments to ensure compliance and conformity with the government policy of improving the status of women;*

d) *liaise with provincial government departments and agencies, other governments and advisory councils and women's organizations on all issues affecting women.*

The Advisory Council also works with women, women's groups, community and other equality-seeking organizations which share an agenda to advance women's equality.

The Advisory Council is funded by the Provincial Government and has an operating budget of $462, 700 for the fiscal year 2011-2012. The office is located in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

2.0 Mandate

The mandate of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women is derived from Section 3 of the *Status of Women Advisory Council Act*, which states that the Advisory Council shall:

a) *Advise the minister on those matters relating to the status of women that the minister refers to the advisory council for consideration;*

b) *Advise the minister on those matters relating to the status of women that the advisory council feels appropriate;*

c) *Bring before the government and the public matters of interest and concern to women; and*

d) *Establish the general policies that will government the organization, administration and operation of the advisory council.*

3.0 Lines of Business

Lines of business are defined as those discrete and coherent sets of programs, services and/or products that represent what the Advisory Council provides to its external clients.

In keeping with the Advisory Council's legislated mandate, the following lines of business have been identified: (1) advising Government on issues affecting the status of women; (2) outreach and consultation; and (3) public education and awareness.

3.1 Advising Government on Issues Affecting the Status of Women

The Advisory Council provides advice and/or recommendations as requested by the Minister and other Government departments and agencies. On an ongoing basis, the Advisory Council is asked for recommendations on changes to, or the creation of, legislation, policies and practices affecting the status of women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The work of the Advisory Council is centred on improving Government policies, programs, practices, services, legislation and budget allocations as a means to advance the equality of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. The Advisory Council also brings emerging issues and concerns to Government. It works with individual women, women's groups, community organizations and the Women's Policy Office to identify the issues and develop an analysis of problems and solutions.

Advisory Council members provide advice and recommendations to Government and advocate for systemic changes. Advice is generally provided through position papers, briefs and written recommendations. The Advisory Council identifies processes to move existing policy forward or to deal with gaps. It also engages in issue analysis, research and consultation. In addition, the Advisory Council participates on a variety of committees and working groups which provide information and recommendations related to advancing the status of women.

3.2 Outreach and Consultation

The Advisory Council provides outreach to equality-seeking organizations and to Government by responding to requests for workshops, presentations and speeches on women's experiences, feminist analysis and gender inclusive analysis. In addition, the Advisory Council proactively undertakes provincial outreach meeting with groups and making presentations in regions across the province.

When working on specific issues, the Advisory Council reaches out to stakeholders, clients and others for information and collaboration. It actively engages in networking and consultation with stakeholders throughout the Province, as well as undertakes research on specific issues.

Much of the Advisory Council's outreach work is done using communications tools such as email, phone, listserv, website and conference calls, however face to face meetings during visits to the provincial regions constitutes another communications vehicle. The Advisory Council hosts and participates in roundtable meetings; brings groups together to facilitate information exchanges; and participates in local, regional and national meetings and conferences. The Advisory Council further engages in outreach with women's equality-seeking groups through participation on boards and advisory committees, such as Women Interested in Successful Employment, the Women in Resource Development Committee and the Council of Marine Professional Associations.

3.3 Public Education and Awareness

The Advisory Council's third line of business is focused on providing public education and awareness on issues related to women's social, legal, economic, political and cultural equality.

The Advisory Council uses the media to provide information on the status of women, both proactively and reactively. This enables the Advisory Council to provide public feminist reaction and analysis on issues both negatively and positively affecting women's equality and inclusion.

In addition, the Advisory Council responds to requests for public presentations at conferences, workshops and events, providing a feminist analysis to a spectrum of social, legal, economic and political issues.

The Advisory Council creates and/or circulates information, briefs, reports and other documents related to the status of women.

4.0 Values

The values expressed in this plan reflect the governing values for the operation of the Advisory Council and the conduct of its staff and council members.

As an equality-seeking organization, the Advisory Council works from a feminist perspective to advocate for women's full and equal participation in all aspects of society. As the Advisory Council responds to the equality concerns of women in Newfoundland and Labrador, it works to include feminist values in all its processes, activities and initiatives.

Commitment Each individual applies feminist principles when asserting equality and challenging inequality, thereby affecting social and economic change.

Dynamic Each individual contributes to meeting the needs of the diverse women's community in response to the changing social and economic climate.

Inclusiveness Each individual works to ensure that all opinions and knowledge are considered so that the strength that exists in the collective voice of women is sustained and enriched by the diversity of women's perspectives.

Evolving Each individual continues to educate herself about women's inequality as a means of fulfilling her responsibility as a feminist leader in an ever changing environment.

Respectful Each individual contributes to the creation of a respectful environment that ensures women have a safe place to speak openly about inequities.

Celebration Each individual acknowledges both the challenges and the joys of working with and for women and celebrates our collective achievements.

Collaborative Each individual acknowledges the value of working with other individuals and groups to forward a shared agenda of advancing women's equality.

5.0 Primary Clients and Related Expectations

For the purpose of this plan, primary clients are defined as any person, group or organization served by or utilizing the programs, services and/or products offered by the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Within this context, the primary clients of the Advisory Council include: the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Women's Policy Office, other Government departments and agencies, equality-seeking women's and community organizations, women in the process of developing an understanding of feminism and equality and individuals within the general public seeking information or advocacy on issues related to the advancement of women.

The mandate and goals of the Advisory Council are achieved by working in partnership with the identified primary clients.

The Advisory Council is actively involved in Government initiatives and strategies such as the Justice Minister's Committee on Violence against Women and horizontal strategies addressing poverty reduction and violence against women.

In order to develop sound advice and recommendations, the Advisory Council works in collaboration with other women's organizations who share its mandate to advance women's equality, such as: Status of Women Councils/Women's Centres, Transition Houses and Shelters, Transition House Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre, Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador, Regional Coordinating Committees against Violence, Women in Resource Development Committee, Women's Committee of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour, Women Interested in Successful Employment and and the Coalition of Provincial & Territorial Advisory Councils on the Status of Women.

In addition to our primary clients, the Advisory Council works and/or partners with other coalitions, working groups and other equality-seeking organizations to advance the status of women.

6.0 Vision

The vision of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women is equality, equity and inclusion for women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

7.0 Mission Statement

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the Advisory Council for 2011-2017. It contains the measures and indicators that will assist both the Council and the public in monitoring and evaluating progress during the 2011-2014 planning cycle.

The mission statement also represents the Advisory Council's work to move forward on the strategic priority areas identified by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and complements the work of its internal government counterpart, the Women's Policy Office.

Mission: By March 31, 2017, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have enhanced its outreach and advisory services in priority areas related to advancing the status of women.

Measure: Enhanced outreach and advisory services in priority areas relating to advancing the status of women

Indicators:

- Enhanced collection of information regarding economic, social, and cultural issues/barriers for women in communities throughout the province
- Provided advice to Government on advancing the economic status of women
- Provided advice to Government on reducing barriers for young women
- Collected information and provided advice to Government on ways to mitigate the anticipated social impacts of economic advancement
- Provided advice to Government on other priority policy areas.

8.0 Governance Issues

In consideration of Government's strategic directions, and the mandate of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the following priority areas have been identified by the council members.

8.1 Issue 1: Improving Justice Services for Women

Women's equality, be it legal, economic or social, is profoundly affected by the design and delivery of justice services, including matters of family law, domestic and sexual violence, correctional services and the court system. In keeping with its mandate to advise the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Government and the public on issues affecting the status of women, during 2011-2014, the Advisory Council has identified key justice issues related to advancing the status of women.

In October 2008, the Department of Justice released, "Out of the Darkness – Moving towards the Light", a review of the prison system in Newfoundland and Labrador. This was predated in June 2007 by "Alone among the Few", a report on facilities and supports for female offenders from Labrador. Both documents identify the varied and complex needs of many female inmates, such as mental health and addiction issues, cultural differences and location and availability of programs and supports in facilities for women.

Additionally, initiatives such as the Family Violence Intervention Court and the Violence Prevention Initiative highlight the importance of policies, programs and supports for women as victims, as well as offenders. Improving justice services for women underpins much of the work to end violence and advance women's equality.

Economic advancement brings with it social impacts, such as increasing sex trade activities, increased substance abuse, increased domestic violence and increased crime in general. Mitigation of these negative impacts, through education, policies and programs is essential to advancing the social and economic status of women.

Goal 1: By March 31 2014, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have gathered information and provided advice and/or recommendations to Government, so as to better inform policy-makers, to further women's equality within key areas of the justice system.

Measure: Provision of advice and recommendations in key areas

Indicators: Advice and recommendations pertaining to:

- Justice services for women with complex needs
- Justice services for Aboriginal women
- Justice services with respect to sexual and domestic violence
- Mitigation of negative social impacts of economic advancement

Objective 1: By March 31, 2012, Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have provided advice and/or recommendations related to the provision of justice services for women with complex needs, Aboriginal women and services with respect to sexual and domestic violence

Measure: Provision of advice and/or recommendations

Indicators: Advice and recommendations submitted to Government pertaining to:

- Justice services for women with complex needs
- Justice services for Aboriginal women
- Justice services with respect to sexual and domestic violence
- Mitigation of social impacts of economic advancement

Objective 2: By March 31, 2013, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have gathered information and developed advice and/or recommendations in key areas related to justice services for women, including but not limited to, sexual assault courts, sex trade and human trafficking and correctional services.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have provided further advice and/or recommendations for emergent issues related to justice services for women.

8.2 Issue 2: Capacity Building for Historically Under-represented Groups of Women

In keeping with its mandate to advise the Minster Responsible for the Status of Women and Government on issues affecting the status of women, council members have identified contributions to ongoing strategic priorities, in particular those involved in enhancing the capacity of aboriginal women and other under-represented populations of women such as multicultural women, women with disabilities and women in rural and isolated areas.

Social and economic inequality, though experienced by women throughout our province, is most prevalent amongst aboriginal women, multicultural women, women with disabilities and women in rural and isolated areas. In line with Government's

continuing commitments to poverty reduction, through the Poverty Reduction Strategy, economic advancement through diversity plans and women's employment plans, reducing violence through dedicated initiatives, support to advancing women in leadership and the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, the Advisory Council will continue to contribute to the shaping of public policy in order to advance women's equality. Throughout this three-year planning cycle, the Advisory Council will develop advice and/or recommendations based on the analysis of women's diverse needs in the province and provide this to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and departments involved with addressing these issues.

These priority issues will contribute to the strategic directions of the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women related to reducing violence and increasing women's social and economic equality particularly for historically under-represented groups of women.

Goal 2: By March 31, 2014, so as to better inform policy-makers, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have provided advice and/or recommendations related to advancing the social and economic equality of historically under-represented groups of women.

Measure: Provision of advice and/or recommendations

Indicators: Advice and recommendations to Government pertaining to:

- Poverty reduction
- Prevention of violence
- Leadership
- Inclusion

Amongst historically under-represented groups of women

Objective 1: By March 31, 2012, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have provided advice and/or recommendations related to the prevention of violence, poverty reduction, economic advancement leadership and inclusion for women in historically under-represented groups.

Measure: Provision of advice and or/recommendations

Indicators: Advice and/or recommendations provided to Government pertaining to:

- Prevention of violence
- Reducing women's poverty
- Advancing leadership
- Inclusion

Objective 2: By March 31, 2013, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have gathered additional information and conducted analysis to further its advice and/or recommendations related to advancing social and economic equality for women in historically under-represented groups.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have furthered its advice and/or recommendations related to advancing social and economic equality for women in historically under-represented groups.

8.3 Issue 3: Advancing Women's Equality in Priority Areas

In keeping with its mandate to bring before Government and the public issues affecting the status of women, the Advisory Council has identified barriers to advancing women's economic and social equality as a strategic issue.

The increasing wage gap between women and men continues to be a critical issue in our province. In the fields of skilled trades and technology there are greater training and employment opportunities for women than ever. While more women are entering the skilled trades and traditionally male dominated fields, women will continue to have difficulty taking advantage of these well-paying employment opportunities unless they have access to supports for their families, such as child care and/or home care.

The majority of women owned businesses in our province tend to be in traditional sectors such as retail. The opportunities for women in business to engage with the rapidly growing, financially lucrative natural resource sector are significant and the need for strategies to remove barriers and facilitate women's participation in businesses in this sector is critical to their economic advancement.

Living in poverty remains a reality for many women in our province. Safe, affordable, accessible housing remains unattainable for many. Horizontal strategies to reduce poverty and increase accessibility of affordable housing continue to be important initiatives in addressing overall poverty. However, the need to focus on strategies to address poverty amongst particular marginalized groups of women is crucial. With our province's aging population, the need to address the economic situation of older

women who are living longer is a growing area of concern. Many women in this category have either very low pensions or no pension whatsoever, contributing to a growing population of women living in poverty.

These priority issues are in keeping with the strategic directions set forth by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. The advice and/or recommendations developed by the Advisory Council will contribute to advancing women's economic equality.

Goal 3: By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have provided advice and/or recommendations to better inform policy-makers on issues related to advancing women's equality, including but not limited to supports for women entering and working in traditionally male dominated fields, supports for women owned non-traditional business and supports for populations of marginalized women.

Measure: Provision of advice and/or recommendations.

Indicators: Advice and/or recommendations provided to Government related to:

- Women in traditionally male dominated occupations and businesses
- Horizontal strategies such as poverty reduction strategy, housing strategy, equal pay and child care

Objective 1: By March 31, 2012, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have provided advice and/or recommendations related to supports for women entering and working in traditionally male dominated fields, supports for women owned non-traditional business and supports for populations of marginalized women.

Measure: Provision of advice and/or recommendations

Indicators: Advice and/or recommendations provided to Government pertaining to:

- The provision of supports for women entering and working in non-traditional settings
- Strategies to support the development of women owned businesses
- Strategies to reduce poverty amongst groups of marginalized women

Objective 2: By March 31, 2013, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have provided advice and/or recommendations related to women in the skilled trades, non-traditional businesses and emerging priority issues as identified by the Council.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have further made recommendations related to women in the skilled trades, non-traditional businesses and emerging priority issues as identified by the Council.

8.4 Issue 4: Advancing Women in Leadership

In keeping with its mandate to bring issues affecting the status of women to Government and the public, the Advisory Council has identified the strategic issue of advancing women in leadership as a priority.

Women continue to be under-represented in elected office at all levels of government. Further to this, women are under-represented in senior leadership and decision making positions within corporations and governments at all levels. Women remain in the minority on agencies, boards and commissions.

This priority issue is in keeping with the strategic directions set forth by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. The advice and/or recommendations developed by the Advisory Council will contribute to advancing women's social and economic equality.

Goal 4: By March 31, 2014, so as to better inform policy-makers, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have provided advice and/or recommendations related to advancing women's equality through addressing barriers to women's representation in leadership and decision making positions.

Measure: Provision of advice and/or recommendations

Indicators: Advice and/or recommendations provided to Government related to:

- Women in leadership and decision making positions

Objective 1: By March 31, 2012, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have provided information on strategies to increase women's representation in leadership and decision making positions.

Measure: Information provided

Indicators: Information provided related to:

- Strategies to increase women's representation in leadership and decision making positions

Objective 2: By March 31, 2013, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have provided advice and/or recommendations related to key areas of support for increasing women's representation in leadership and decision making positions.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have provided further advice and/or recommendations related to key areas of support for increasing women's representation in leadership and decision making positions.

8.5 Issue 5: Reducing Barriers for Young Women

In keeping with its mandate to bring issues affecting the status of women to Government and the public, the Advisory Council has identified the strategic issue of reducing barriers for young women as a priority.

Significant initiatives have been established to encourage young women to reach their greatest potential, through education, entering traditionally male dominated fields in trades and technology and developing businesses that support our province's growing natural resource sector. However, the impact of social and popular media, the hyper-sexualization of young women and girls and the social impacts of our new economic reality provide a growing challenge to our efforts to have young women reach their potential.

This priority issue is in keeping with the strategic directions set forth by the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. The advice and/or recommendations developed by the Advisory Council will contribute to reducing barriers for young women.

Goal 5: By March 31, 2014, so as to better inform policy-makers, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have provided advice and/or recommendations related to reducing barriers for young women.

Measure: Provision of advice and/or recommendations

Indicators: Advice and/or recommendations provided to Government related to:

- Reducing barriers for young women

Objective 1: By March 31, 2012, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have initiated information gathering related to the range of options for reducing barriers and providing supports for young women.

Measure: Information gathered

Indicators: Information on:

- Options for reducing barriers and providing supports for young women

Objective 2: By March 31, 2013, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have provided advice and/or recommendations related to reducing barriers and providing supports for young women.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have provided further advice and/or recommendations related to reducing barriers and providing supports for young women.

8.6 Issue 6: Public Awareness and Outreach

In keeping with its mandate to bring issues affecting the status of women to Government and the public, the Advisory Council has identified the strategic issue of public awareness and outreach as a priority.

By implementing a strategic approach to its public awareness and outreach activities, the Advisory Council will effectively contribute to the strategic directions of the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women by bringing attention to the roots of women's inequality and the importance of effective public policies which advance the status of women.

Goal 6: By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have undertaken province-wide public awareness and outreach initiatives to improve access to information and resources.

Measure: Initiatives are undertaken to improve access

Indicators:
- Province-wide outreach is conducted
- Improved promotion of the role and services of the Advisory Council
- Education and outreach tools are expanded and/or improved

Objective 1: By March 31, 2012, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have begun provincial public awareness and outreach initiatives and improved communications tools.

Measure: Outreach initiatives have begun and communication tools are improved

Indicators:
- Implementation of a strategic outreach plan has begun
- Outreach activity is conducted in three of the nine regions of the province
- Social media applications are explored
- List-serve and the Advisory Council webpage have been expanded
- Engagement with the media

Objective 2: By March 31, 2013, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have further implemented strategic outreach initiatives.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2014, the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women will have continued the implementation of strategic outreach initiatives.